

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1733

As Reported by House Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections

Title: An act relating to transparency in state capital and transportation budget appropriations and expenditures.

Brief Description: Requiring capital and transportation project investments to be searchable by the public for certain detailed information.

Sponsors: Representatives Riccelli, Hawkins, Bergquist, Alexander, Fitzgibbon, Buys, Tarleton, Manweller, Vick, Reykdal, Sawyer, Sells, Springer, Ryu, Clibborn, Angel, Jinkins, Maxwell, Pollet, Farrell, Moscoso, Ormsby, Morrell and Magendanz.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Operations & Elections: 2/21/13 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Makes capital and transportation project appropriation and expenditure data publicly available and easily accessible.
- Requires the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to establish objective and performance measures for capital budget and transportation budget investments.
- Requires the OFM to publicly report the performance measures.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Buys, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Carlyle, Fitzgibbon, Kristiansen, Manweller, Orwall and Van De Wege.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Taylor, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Caitlin Forsyth (786-5793) and Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

Under the State Budget and Accounting Act, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) maintains a comprehensive financial accounting and reporting system for all agencies of state government. This system accounts for revenues, expenditures, receipts, and disbursements, as well as statewide budget information.

The Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program (LEAP) Committee was established in 1977 to be the Legislature's independent source of information and technology. The LEAP Committee provides fiscal information and technology for developing budgets and communicating budget decisions, and tracking revenue, expenditure, and staffing activity.

In 2008 the Legislature directed the OFM to make publicly available a state expenditure information website that contains for the prior fiscal year: (1) state expenditures by fund or account; (2) expenditures by agency, program, and subprogram; (3) state revenues by source; (4) state expenditures by budget object and subobject; and (5) state agency workloads, caseloads, and performance measurements. This information is available on LEAP's "Washington State Fiscal Information" website.

Summary of Bill:

Current and future capital project and transportation project investments must be made available to the public on the website in an accessible format, i.e., a geographical map where an individual can view capital and transportation project appropriation and expenditure data by legislative district, county, or agency project. This appropriation and expenditure data must include the project title, total appropriation, project description, expenditure data, and must identify the administering agency.

The LEAP Committee must use existing resources to meet these requirements and update the website. The website must be easy to use, contain current and readily available data, and allow for review and analysis by the public. The LEAP Committee must test the website with potential users to ensure its accessibility and ease of comprehension.

The OFM must establish objectives and performance measures for capital budget and transportation budget investments. Performance measures must include jobs created or retained, if available. Performance measures may also include habitat restored, schools built or modernized, fish barriers removed, prison beds, higher education facilities built, and other measures. These performance measures must be reported on the website described above.

Appropriation: None.**Fiscal Note:** Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill will increase government accountability and transparency. Millions of public dollars go to all corners of the state; the public is often unaware of where their tax dollars are going. The public should be able to track what projects they are funding in their community. The goal of this bill would be to have a website with a geographical map where a person can hover with their mouse over a county, city, or legislative district and see funded projects. Recognizing the budget constraints of the state, the amendment will hopefully remove the fiscal impact the original bill had.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Riccelli, prime sponsor; Representative Hawkins; Tom Jensen, Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program Committee; and Jeff Pavey, Paladin Data Systems.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.